

Edison Brothers Building  
Trompe l'Oeil Mural  
400 Fourteenth Street  
St. Louis  
St. Louis (independent city)  
Missouri

HABS No. MO-1837

HABS  
MO,  
96-SALU,  
95-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HAB  
MO,  
96-SALU,  
95-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

EDISON BROTHERS BUILDING, TROMPE L'OEIL MURAL

HABS No. MO-1873

Location: Edison Brothers Shoe Stores Distribution Center Building,  
400 Fourteenth Street, St. Louis, St. Louis (independent  
city), Missouri

Significance: All themes shown in the mural depict some aspect of the  
1904 St. Louis World's Fair. The south elevation of the  
building features the image of King Louis IX, based on the  
statue now located in front of the St. Louis Art Museum.

Richard Haas, a New York City artist, designed the mural.  
The late 1970's and early 1980's witnessed a brief trend of  
architectural mural painting. Critics hailed such building  
decorations as an antidote to the problems modern  
architecture had brought to cities. According to the  
general opinion at that time, modern buildings had become  
dull and predictable, unlike the whimsical character of  
Haas's murals. Among other projects, Haas designed a mural  
for the back wall of the Boston Architectural Center which  
received much praise. However, the attention seems to have  
been short-lived: after about 1980, printed sources gave  
less attention to Haas.

The mural in St. Louis covers three sides of the building.  
(The fourth side of the building is more or less obscured  
by surrounding structures.) The Edison Brothers Shoe  
Company photographed the building extensively before,  
during, and after the execution of the work.

Sources:

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Smith, Judy, 1988. Telephone interview by Robert Buerglener, August 4. Smith is a representative of the Edison Brothers Shoe Store Company.

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Historian:

Robert Buerglener, HABS, August, 1988.

ADDENDUM TO  
EDISON BROTHERS BUILDING, TROMPE L'OEIL MURAL  
400 Fourteenth Street  
Saint Louis City  
Missouri

HABS No. MO-1837

HABS  
MO,  
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